

Queer by hippocampers

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: F/M, but it's not bad, maybe tw for canon homophobia

Language: English

Characters: Dustin Henderson, Eleven (Stranger Things), Lucas Sinclair, Mike Wheeler, will byers (mentioned)

Relationships: Eleven/Mike Wheeler, Will Byers/Mike Wheeler (implied one-sided)

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Summary:

Eleven learns some difficult concepts, while trying to understand the basic rules of friendship.

Queer

“What’s ‘queer’?”

They’re sitting in the Wheeler basement, not exactly doing much, but trying to busy themselves nonetheless. Eleven has removed her wig, but keeps the dress. She likes the feel of it against her skin, and the way it matches the colour of Mike’s cheeks each time he catches her eye. She doesn’t know what this means, but it makes her stomach feel odd all the same. Her question follows Will’s memorial assembly, and it strikes all three boys mute. Mike shuffles his feet a little, and Dustin fiddles with the cuffs of his sleeves, neither sure how to broach the topic.

Eleven waits.

Conversely, Lucas’ already-displeased expression darkens, frown lines on his forehead. “It’s not a cool word, El.”

Eleven blinks, and nods, though only half understanding. “Oh. Okay.” She seems to shrink away slightly, as if being punished. Unwanted memories of Papa’s harsh tone resurface in her head, and she stubbornly resists tears as she represses them once more. “Sorry.”

“It’s alright, you didn’t know,” Mike looks up, eager to see the hurt look on the girl’s face disappear. “It- It’s kind of- Well- It’s mean,” he trails off. There’s not an easy way to explain such a complex concept when you don’t *really* get it yourself.

Again, Eleven nods. “Will. Queer?”

“No!” Lucas fights to keep his voice from rising. “Don’t say that-“

“Lucas, man, she doesn’t get it.” Ever the peace keeper, Dustin lays a hand on his friend’s shoulder, before directing his words to Eleven, uncharacteristically careful. “It- It’s not a nice word for a guy who... likes other guys.”

A frown crosses Eleven’s face. “Like you?”

Dustin rubs a hand across his face, with a shake of his head, before

looking at Mike for a clearer answer. Eleven doesn't blame him; Mike has a way of clarifying things nobody else has matched yet.

The freckled boy makes a face, shifting position slightly. "Like... Likes them in a more-than-friends way."

Eyes widening, Eleven lets out a small gasp. "More-than-friend?" In her short life, she has never even known friend. It's almost impossible to imagine liking anyone more than she likes the three boys here in front of her now. They are her world, her saviours. How can she like anything more than that?

"Yeah. Like a boyfriend/girlfriend way. Um... Like.... They want to kiss and stuff. A kiss is like, putting your mouths together. It's nice. I guess. I dunno." Eleven tilts her head slightly – Mike's cheeks have turned cherry red. It just makes her stomach feel even more off.

Out of her line of sight, Dustin flashes Lucas a goofy grin, and receives an elbow to the ribs for his troubles. This doesn't have its desired effect, resulting only in a wider grin and a mouthed "He *like*-likes her," from the other boy.

A few beats of silence pass, before Eleven offers a slow nod. "Okay. Mouthbreathers, they said–"

Lucas nods. "Yeah. They just wanna hurt us. And Will. But don't listen, yeah? It's cool, I guess, if guys wanna like guys. But it's not cool to call them names."

"Yeah," Dustin nods along. "I mean if Will likes Mi–"

"Shut UP, Dustin!" A pillow flies across the room to knock the curly-haired boy's hat off to one side. "Leave it!"

"Okay, okay!! Sorry, man. Just- Anyone can like anyone. It's all cool," he grins, fixing his hat and throwing the pillow back at Mike with a suggestive jerk of his eyebrows. "As long as they don't start kissing and stuff in front of their friends. That would NOT be cool."

Eleven seems to miss the joke in this, and appears to have been processing it deeply. She nods. "Okay. Friends don't lie, and don't kiss in front of other friends. Okay." Lots of things in this new world

are confusing, but friendship is something she is learning to understand well. She thinks it would be nice to learn about more-than-friends too, at some point, perhaps with a certain freckled brunet. But that's for later. For now, this concept is enough.

Author's Note:

So I am currently going through that period where I become intensely obsessed with a new show/series. Good thing is, unlike my other interests, I know this one will actually get a second series!! (*cough cough* Whitechapel *cough cough*).

First ST fic, so comments on characterisation and style would be appreciated. I've never really written kids before either, so I'm not sure if I got their speech patterns etc. right. Please let me know!

As ever, I can be found on [tumblr](#). Prompts are welcome, since I struggle thinking of my own. All my love <3